

Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic cancer occurs when cells in the pancreas grow uncontrollably and form a tumor. It is the third leading cause of cancer-related death in the U.S. Because pancreatic cancer is aggressive and often does not cause symptoms until it is advanced, people with a family history or other inherited risk factors may qualify for genetic testing and screening.

Statistics

- In 2026, an estimated 67,530 new cases of pancreatic cancer will be diagnosed in the United States.
- An estimated 52,740 people will die from pancreatic cancer in 2026.
- The five-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer is 13% overall.

Risk Factors

Several risk factors can increase a patient's risk of developing pancreatic cancer, such as:

- **Tobacco Use:** Smoking exposes the body to harmful chemicals that can damage pancreatic DNA. People who smoke have about twice the risk of developing pancreatic cancer compared to those who have never smoked.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** Pancreatic cancer is more common in people with diabetes, though the exact reason is not fully understood.
- **Excess Body Weight:** Being overweight or obese increases pancreatic cancer risk. Chronic inflammation and insulin resistance associated with excess body weight can create conditions that make pancreatic cancer more likely.
- **Family History of Pancreatic Cancer:** Some cases of pancreatic cancer are linked to inherited genetic mutations. Genetic testing may help identify a person's risk.
- **Personal History of Pancreatitis:** Long-term pancreatitis can lead to ongoing inflammation and genetic damage in the pancreas, increasing the risk of pancreatic cancer.
- **Occupational Exposures:** Exposure to cadmium and other occupational chemicals and pesticides can increase risk.

Symptoms

Pancreatic cancer symptoms do not usually appear until the disease is advanced. Symptoms can include:

- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain that can extend to the back
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes)
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Prevention

There is no sure way to prevent pancreatic cancer. However, you can take steps to lower your risk, such as:

- Staying away from tobacco
- Maintaining a healthy diet and weight
- Getting regular physical activity
- Avoiding or limiting alcohol
- Limiting exposure to harmful chemicals

Treatment Options

Depending on the stage of disease and the tumor's size and location, pancreatic cancer may be treated with one or a combination of the following:

- Surgery
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Targeted therapy
- Immunotherapy

About Texas Oncology

Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology is an independent, physician-led practice and a member of the US Oncology Network. With more than 550 physicians and 300 locations across Texas, Texas Oncology serves over 250,000 cancer patients each year.

Texas Oncology provides advanced care across 19 specialties and offers a comprehensive clinical trials and research program that has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).